IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claim 9 as follows:

1.(original) A method for transmitting DSI and NDSI over a communication link of a communication network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting fragmented NDSI in accordance with a network protocol where the fragmenting is based on parameters of received DSI and is performed in accordance with a network layer protocol.

2.(original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting NDSI comprises:

calculating a fragmentation requirement for each received initial DSI;

reviewing the fragmentation requirements of the received DSI after a new DSI requirement was calculated or after transmission of a DSI was terminated to determine a fragmentation requirement that is most restrictive; and

altering the fragmenting of NDSI to comply with the most restrictive fragmentation requirement.

3.(original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of transmitting DSI in accordance with required timing relationships and transmitting NDSI in a non-fragmented manner when there are no DSI to be transmitted.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 where the network protocol is an OSI-based layer 3 protocol.

5.(original) The method of claim 1 where the fragmenting is further based on information rate of the communication link.

6.(original) The method of claim 1 where the parameters of the received DSI comprise such variables as information compression, sample rate of DSI, number of communication channels included in the DSI, amount of overhead information included in the DSI and amount of subscriber information in the DSI.

7. (original) An apparatus for transmitting DSI and NDSI over a communication link of a communication network where the apparatus fragments the NDSI in accordance with a network layer protocol and based on parameters of received DSI.

8. (original) The apparatus of claim 7 configures as an IAD coupled to subscriber equipment and to an access network.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 7 configured as host equipment ~~network~~ where such host equipment is coupled to a packet based communication network and to an access network.

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